(b) the extent of damage caused to those States due to these natural calamities; and

(c) the details of steps taken to extend adequate Central assistance to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV):(a) and (b) No State has so far reported drought this year on account of deficit rainfall during the current South-West Monsoon. The Ministry of Home Affairs is concerned with matters relating to other natural calamities including flood and they have been requested to supply the necessary information.

(c) Ready availability of funds exists under Calamity Relief Fund(CRF) for undertaking immediate measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought and flood.

Crop diversification

567. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether crop diversification has been recognized as a device to reduce drought impact;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to propagate the device; and

(c) what concrete steps have been taken by the Centre in collaboration with State Governments for effective implementation of soil and water conservation measures through watershed development in rain-fed areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV):(a) and (b) State Governments are being advised to undertake diversification programme substituting traditional crops, with suitable crops giving thrust on oilseeds and pulses which may help in reducing impact of the drought.

(c) The National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA) was launched in 1990-91 in 28 States and 2 Union Territories based on twin concepts of Integrated Watershed Management and Sustainable Farming Systems. The programme specifically focuses on:

- Conservation, development and sustainable management of natural resources including various use.
- Enhancement of agricultural production and productivity in a sustainble manner.
- Restoration of ecological balance in the degraded and fragile rainfed eco-system by greening these areas through appropriate mix of trees, shrubs and grasses.
- Reduction in regional disparity between irrigated and rainfed areas and
- Creation of sustained employment opportunities for the rural community including the landless.

An expenditure of Rs.967.00 crore during Eighth Plan period and Rs.911 crore during Ninth Plan period has been incurred on implementation of the scheme. The scheme is continuing during Tenth Plan period under Macro Management Mode.

In addition, two land based programmes, namely (i) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone River; and (ii) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas in the North-Eastern Regions are also under implementation.

Computer purchase scam in ICAR

†568. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that instead of penalising the persons accused of computer purchase scam involving crores of rupees in ICAR, Government are trying to hush up the matter;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Central Vigilance Commission despite their all out efforts have not so far recovered the reports of the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.